

## Southwest Resource Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting on Friday, May 21 2004  
Bill Heddles Recreation Center  
Delta, CO.

9:00 a.m. Dave Ubell called the meeting to order. He welcomed Resource Advisory Council (RAC) members, visitors and BLM personnel.

### Attendees:

Southwest Resource Advisory Council Members: Howard Heath, Dave Ubell, Kelly Wilson, John Field, Art Goodtimes, Nikolai Kendziorski, Kathy Welt, Alan Staehle, Don Cardin, Ann McCoy Harold, and Andrea Robinson. *The attendees today constitute a quorum.*

BLM: Mark Stiles, Barry Tollefson, Barbara Sharrow, and Dave Kauffman.

Visitors: No members of the public were present.

Introductory Remarks: Barbara Sharrow, Uncompahgre Field Office Manager, introduced herself to the RAC. Barb became the new Uncompahgre Manager in April, replacing Allan Belt.

Dave Ubell briefed the RAC on the National RAC Chair meeting in Phoenix. Dave mentioned he felt the meeting was very productive and there was positive communication between the Director and RAC Chairs. The topic of RAC appointments was discussed including the need to streamline the process and provide for better communication between BLM and the RAC.

Andrea and several members expressed concern over the timing, end of previous appointments and thought the process could be improved. Mark Stiles explained to the RAC where BLM was in the appointment process. Dave Kauffman and Barb Sharrow agreed, that communication with the RAC could be improved and volunteered the Uncompahgre Field Office to be the RAC point of contact for the next year. Barry added that the Western Slope Center was getting a new position to help with the RAC and public affairs, so this would also improve coordination.

Dave Ubell also passed out a weed resolution from the Front Range RAC, encouraging the RAC to adopt. The subject was tabled until later in the day.

### Discussion:

Andrea told the RAC she thought the action by Ron Wenker, BLM Colorado State Director to withdraw a parcel located in the North Fork from the May gas lease offering (until more information was available) was the right thing to do. She felt this was commendable for the State Director to look at an individual parcel and made a motion to pass a resolution of support. Allan Stahele agreed this was an appropriate action, and after some discussion the RAC unanimously approved.

Mark Stiles discussed the Northern Basin Coal Bed Gas project and provided an update on the EIS. The EIS is analyzing impacts of permitting industry proposed coal bed gas wells. He explained BLM's role and responsibility and indicated there is a lot of concern. Nick, Lon and Ann constitute a SW RAC subgroup on this project and are interested in helping to get the issues out on the table and work with the public more effectively. Mark indicated the draft EIS would be out in May or June and that BLM was planning one hearing and several open houses. The RAC subgroup will help with public comments, and the open houses. Kathy may have to fill in for Lon on this subgroup. The RAC agreed to this at today's meeting.

### Fire Preparedness:

Steve Ellis Fire Management Officer for Montrose Interagency Dispatch (serving Grand Mesa-Uncompagre Gunnison National Forests, BLM Uncompagre and Gunnison Field Offices) gave the RAC a briefing on fire preparedness. Steve discussed how his organization prepares for the fire season, working with BLM, U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service, County Commissioners, Sheriffs, and local Fire Departments to prepare agreements for resource sharing, mutual aid, training and staffing fire crews, etc. Much of this work goes on year around. Steve emphasized the main strategy here is to work out issues ahead of time, rather than during a fire. He also stressed the importance of fire fighter safety and the necessity of continual training.

Alan provided supportive comments from his involvement with Ouray County adding that the process works very well. He also stressed the importance of homeowners and private landowners taking responsibility and reducing fire risks on their own property. Alan added the video Maggie McCaffery helped put together was excellent and suggested the RAC see it at some point.

### CPR Program:

Wayne Wolf, Delta County Commissioner, and John Moore, US Forest Service, Delta gave the RAC an update on the County Partnership in Restoration program (CPR). Wayne indicated the main idea behind the program was to provide a forum for Counties to sit down with the Federal land management agencies on a regular basis. The effort locally is linked with two other similar projects in New Mexico and Arizona. The programs are trying to secure funding from Washington for large scale restoration projects, but so far have not been successful.

Art feels the CPR program is a good model or mechanism for involvement and sees it being useful to the USFS in the same way as the RAC can provide input to BLM. Art added that even if the CPR program is unsuccessful at getting funding, it should continue in an advisory function as it provides a good mechanism for continuing dialogue. Dave Ubell felt the CPR program may have gotten the process backwards which may help explain some of the frustration. Usually funding comes down from Congress first, then a group is formed. In the case of the CPR, the group formed first and now is trying to obtain funding.

#### Uncompahgre Project:

Rick Sherman, Technical Coordinator provided a briefing on the Uncompahgre Plateau Project (UP). The project covers 1.5 million acres of land of which 37% is public land managed by the BLM. The main goals of the project are landscape restoration, maintaining social, cultural, values, economic viability, and promoting education and stewardship. Rick discussed progress to date and stressed the importance of continuing to build trust. He added the UP project is working well, there is great collaboration and many projects have been initiated on the ground; treatments on approximately 17,000 acres of public land have been implemented. BLM could not have done this alone. There was a good discussion with RAC members who were supportive of this type of grass roots project.

#### Roads:

Mark summarized RAC discussion from previous meeting in Silverton, CO. There was a lot of concern and discussion regarding RS-2477. Mark indicated this is true statewide and the whole issue may be in courts for a long period. Mark added the discussion with the RAC at the Silverton meeting was helpful; it got a lot of issues on the table and provided good background to move road maintenance discussions forward and possibly operational procedures between surrounding counties. Mark also indicated the CCI group was working on this issue at the State level. Again there was lots of discussion at today's meeting among the RAC, with the prevailing sentiment of RAC members agreeing to work together to avoid getting at odds over the roads issue.

#### CANM:

Kelly briefed the RAC on the status of Transportation Planning associated with the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument. Kelly is working with the 11 member Advisory Committee and indicated the next step was to get the proposal to the users and public for their feedback. The Advisory Group is also working on education and outreach. Kelly felt it was important to foster better stewardship since private landowners have played a role in protecting Monument Resources.

Old Business:

There were no items for discussion that carried over from previous meetings.

After a chance to read through the Front Range Weed Resolution, Andrea made a motion for the SW RAC to adopt a similar resolution, essentially just changing the name to the SW RAC. Howard seconded the motion and the RAC unanimously approved. Dave Kauffman will type up only changing name of the RAC, date and officials signing. Dave Ubell will sign for the SW RAC and Mark will sign as the Designated Federal Officer.

Next Meeting and Agenda:

The RAC discussed the timing of the next meeting which was set for July 23, 2004 in Lake City. After a number of items were suggested for the agenda, but the consensus was to keep to a few topics allowing for more discussion. Wilderness and Wilderness Study Area Management was the primary topic set for Lake City meeting.

The Meeting Adjourned at 4:30 p.m.